

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1293

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 GENEVA 09611

EXDIS USCTB

PASS TO DOE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PARM US UK UR

SUBJECT: CTB NEGOTIATIONS: SOVIET CONCERN ABOUT WORK ON

ARTICLE I

CTB MESSAGE NO. 248

1. SUMMARY: IN RECENT CONTACTS WITH JOHNSON AND NEIDLE (US),
PETROSYANTS AND TIMERBAEV (USSR) HAVE EXPRESSED CONCERN
ABOUT FACT THAT THE US DEL WAS NOT PREPARED TO BEGIN
DRAFTING OF ARTICLE I OF THE MULTILATERAL TREATY (THE
MAIN PROHIBITIONS). THE SOVIETS SAID THEIR PEOPLE IN
MOSCOW WERE ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT WHETHER US DEL'S DESIRE
NOT TO BEGIN DRAFTING ARTICLE I, TOGETHER WITH RECENT US
PRESS ARTICLES ON CTB, INDICATED THAT THE US MIGHT NOT BE
FULLY SERIOUS ABOUT CTB. WE HAVE EMPHASIZED US DESIRE TO
EXPEDITE THE NEGOTIATIONS AND HAVE EXPLAINED THAT, BECAUSE
OF US TECHNICAL STUDIES ON THE POSSIBILITY OF UNDERSTAND-

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INGS, US DEL WOULD PREFER TO RETURN TO ARTICLE I LATER.
GIVEN THIS SITUATION, IT IS CLEARLY IN OUR INTEREST TO BE
IN A POSITION TO TAKE UP ARTICLE I AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE
IN ORDER TO PREVENT SOVIET OFFICIALS FROM USING OUR POST-
PONEMENT OF CONSIDERATION OF ARTICLE I AS A JUSTIFICATION
FOR PROCRASTINATION OR RIGIDITY ON THEIR PART. END SUMMARY.

2. IN DISCUSSION OF WORK SCHEDULE, AT THE LAST MEETING OF THE POLITICAL WORKING GROUP, JUNE 12, TIMERBAEV SUGGESTED THAT IT WOULD BE LOGICAL TO BEGIN WORK ON ARTICLE I, HAVING COMPLETED THE PRESENT STAGE OF WORK ON VERIFICATION FOR THE MULTILATERAL TREATY. HOWEVER, IN LIGHT OF DIFFERING VIEWS ON THE WORK SCHEDULE, TIMERBAEV THEN PROPOSED INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS TO CONSIDER NEXT STEPS.

3. AS REPORTED IN INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS WITH NEIDLE AND MCCORMACK ON JUNE 13 AND 14, TIMERBAEV AGAIN PRESSED TO BEGIN DEVELOPING COMPOSITE DRAFT OF ARTICLE I. IN RESPONSE, NEIDLE RECALLED THAT THE US HAD INDICATED, IN ITS DECEMBER 7 WORKING PAPER, THE POSSIBLE NEED FOR MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE UNDERSTANDINGS. HE EXPLAINED THAT USG CONSIDERATION OF THIS HIGHLY TECHNICAL SUBJECT WAS STILL UNDERWAY AND THAT THEREFORE THE US DEL WAS NOT YET IN A POSITION TO BEGIN JOINT DRAFTING OF ARTICLE I AND WOULD PREFER TO TAKE IT UP A LITTLE LATER.

4. AT JUNE 16 LUNCH WITH JOHNSON AND NEIDLE, PETROSYANTS AND TIMERBAEV RETURNED TO THIS ISSUE AND EXPRESSED APPREHENSION ABOUT US DEL'S DESIRE TO DEFER TAKING UP THE BASIC PROHIBITION. THEY RAISED THIS POINT AFTER COMPLAINING AT LENGTH ABOUT THE EVANS AND NOVAK COLUMN AND THE GREENBERG COLUMN ON CTB AND OBJECTING IN PARTICULAR TO GREENBERG'S REFERENCE TO POSITIONS THE SOVIETS HAVE

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TAKEN IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. JOHNSON AND NEIDLE RESPONDED BY DESCRIBING THE REALITIES OF A FREE PRESS AND BY URGING THE SOVIETS TO FOCUS ON WHAT OFFICIAL USG REPRESENTATIVES WERE SAYING, INCLUDING WARNKE'S COMMENTS ON THE PRESIDENT'S STRONG PERSONAL INTEREST IN THE NEGOTIATIONS AND HIS DESIRE THAT THE WORK BE EXPEDITED. NEIDLE AGAIN EXPLAINED THAT THE US DEL PREFERRED TO TAKE UP ARTICLE I LATER BECAUSE OF TECHNICAL STUDIES STILL UNDER WAY IN WASHINGTON. PETROSYANTS INTERJECTED, WITH SOME FORCE: "NO--THE ISSUE IS NOT TECHNICAL, BUT POLITICAL."

5. TIMERBAEV RAISED THIS MATTER AGAIN, DURING INFORMAL CONVERSATION WITH NEIDLE AND MCCORMACK ON JUNE 20, EMPHASIZING THAT HE DID NOT WISH TO BE POLEMICAL BUT WANTED THE US DEL TO UNDERSTAND CONCERNs ON THE SOVIET SIDE. NOTING THAT THE SOVIET DEL HAD REPORTED THAT THE US WAS NOT PREPARED TO BEGIN DRAFTING DF ARTICLE I, TIMERBAEV SAID THAT OFFICIALS IN MOSCOW, WHO HAD READ RECENT US PRESS ARTICLES ON CONTROVERSY ABOUT THE CTB, WERE ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT US SERIOUSNESS. AFTER ALL, TIMERBAEV SAID, THE BASIC PROHIBITION WAS FUNDAMENTAL, AND, IF IT WAS ONLY A QUESTION OF UNDERSTANDINGS, THE US COULD BEGIN WORK ON

COMPOSITE LANGUAGE WHILE RESERVING ITS POSITION ON THE POSSIBILITY OF UNDERSTANDINGS IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDARD NEGOTIATING PRACTICE. TIMERBAEV SAID THE SOVIETS HAD EXPECTED THAT THE PRESENT ROUND WOULD BE THE CULMINATING STAGE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, AND INDEED, HAD SENT PETROSYANTS TO GENEVA AS HEAD OF THE SOVIET DEL IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT THE SOVIET SIDE WOULD BE ABLE TO MOVE AHEAD EXPEDITIOUSLY ON THE REMAINING ISSUES.

6. NEIDLE AGAIN REVIEWED, IN THE TERMS DESCRIBED ABOVE, THE REASONS WHY THE US DEL WOULD PREFER TO TAKE UP

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ARTICLE I LATER AND THE IMPORTANCE OF FOCUSING ON WHAT WAS BEING SAID BY OFFICIAL US REPRESENTATIVES RATHER THAN ON PRESS SPECULATION. NEIDLE ALSO REVIEWED THE PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER USEFUL WORK, IN THE NEAR TERM, ON OSI RIGHTS AND FUNCTIONS, THE TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF NSS, THE NUMBER AND LOCATION OF NSS, AND LANGUAGE ON DURATION AND THE REVIEW CONFERENCE, ON WHICH THE US DEL WAS AWAITING WORD FROM WASHINGTON. TIMERBAEV ACKNOWLEDGED THAT USEFUL WORK COULD BE DONE IN THESE AREAS AND SAID THAT HE PERSONALLY UNDERSTOOD THE SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO PRESS SPECULATION. HE AGAIN UNDERLINED, HOWEVER, THAT FAILURE TO AGREE TO BEGIN WORK ON ARTICLE I, AND THE US PRESS STORIES, HAD SPARKED QUESTIONS FROM MOSCOW THAT WERE DIFFICULT TO ANSWER. IN CONCLUSION, TIMERBAEV SAID THE

SOVIET SIDE HOPED THERE WOULD BE NO OTHER "SURPRISES" AND ASKED WHERE THE US SIDE STOOD IN REGARD TO THE QUESTION OF HANDLING CHEMICAL EXPLOSIONS, WHICH THE US DEL HAD FLAGGED EARLIER. NEIDLE SAID THE US DEL HAD SOUGHT GUIDANCE ON THIS POINT AND EXPECTED TO BE ABLE TO TAKE IT

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UP IN DUE COURSE.

7. COMMENT: SO FAR, SOVIET EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN ABOUT OUR DESIRE TO POSTPONE WORK ON ARTICLE I HAVE NOT BEEN ACCCOMPANIED BY ANY ACTUAL OR THREATENED REFUSAL TO TAKE UP OTHER AREAS OF WORK WHERE PROGRESS MAY BE POSSIBLE. NEVERTHELESS, OUR INABILITY TO PROCEED WITH NEGOTIATION OF ARTICLE I IS A NEGATIVE FACTOR. WE ARE PRESSING THE SOVIET DEL ON MANY FRONTS, ESPECIALLY VERIFICATION, TO ACCEPT APPROACHES WHICH REPRESENT NEW AND DIFFICULT STEPS FOR THE SOVIET BUREAUCRACY. IT IS CERTAINLY EASIER FOR SOME SOVIET OFFICIALS, BOTH HERE AND IN MOSCOW, TO ARGUE THAT THERE IS NO REASON FOR THE SOVIET SIDE TO "BITE-THE-BULLET" ON ONE OR ANOTHER VERIFICATION ISSUE IF, AS THEY ARGUE, IT IS NOT CLEAR THAT THE US SIDE REALLY WANTS A COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN. WE UNDERSTAND THAT MORE WORK IS BEING DONE IN WASHINGTON THAT COULD HAVE BEARING ON ARTICLE I. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE IN OUR INTEREST TO BE IN A POSITION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE SOVIETS ON ARTICLE I BASED ON THE LANGUAGE, WHICH THE SOVIETS ALREADY HAVE, FROM OUR DECEMBER 7 WORKING PAPER. END COMMENT. JOHNSON

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